R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 019 155 RC 000 473

APPROACHES TO FIRST GRADE ENGLISH READING INSTRUCTION FOR CHILDREN FROM SPANISH-SPEAKING HOMES.

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PUB DATE MAR 66

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.48 10P.

DESCRIPTORS- *BASIC READING, *ENGLISH INSTRUCTION, ENGLISH (SECOND LANGUAGE), *LANGUAGE ENRICHMENT, PRIMARY EDUCATION, *READING PROGRAMS, READING DEVELOPMENT, BETTS BASIC READERS,

TWENTY-NINE OUTSTANDING, EXPERIENCED TEACHERS WERE SELECTED TO CONDUCT A STUDY TO DETERMINE A SEQUENCE OF SKILLS APPROPRIATE FOR FIRST GRADE CHILDREN FROM SPANISH-SPEAKING HOMES WHO WERE LEARNING TO READ IN ENGLISH. THREE RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TEACHING METHODS WERE USED--(1) A BASAL READER APPROACH, (2) A LANGUAGE-EXPERIENCE APPROACH, AND (3) THE USE OF A TEXTBOOK SERIES DESIGNED FOR TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPANISH-SPEAKING PRIMARY CHILDREN. EXTENSIVE PRE- AND POST-TESTING INDICATED THE BASAL READER APPROACH DEVELOPED THE HIGHEST ACHIEVEMENT IN READING SKILLS. (SF)

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APPROACHES TO FIRST GRADE ENGLISH READING INSTRUCTION FOR CHILDREN FROM SPANISH-SPEAKING HOMES

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Background. Data from the 1960 U. S. Census indicated that 3,464,999 persons of Spanish surname lived in five states of the Southwest: Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. They constituted 11.8 per cent of the total population of these states. Evidence was available to indicate that most of the Spanish-surnamed people spoke Spanish as their mother tongue, and subscribed to a cultural value system somewhat different from that upon which the school curriculum was based.

The works of Manuel (5), Tireman (6), and others in the Southwest led to the conclusion that preschool or kindergarten instruction was an important part of the process of teaching English language skills and other needed acculturation skills (such as working for future rather than immediate reward) to Spanish-speaking children. However, when the child arrived in first grade with a still-inadequate command of English for his age group, there was little agreement about the teaching approaches that would best accomplish the language and other acculturation skills necessary for school success.

Objectives. The scope of the study as proposed did not indlude the identification and measurement of progress in the several acculturation skills needed by Spanish-speaking children for school success, although attempts were made to keep them in mind. The study did focus upon one of those skills: reading in English. Two main objectives were proposed:

RC 000 423

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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1. To test the null hypothesis that there is no difference in achievement in reading English in first grade between pupils who speak Spanish at home and are taught by a conventional English readiness and basal reader approach (BR), such pupils who are taught by a modified "Teaching English as a Second Language" approach (TESL), and such pupils who are taught by a language-experience approach (LEA).

2. To provide and organize data to aid in determining a specific cequence of skills that is appropriate for first grade children from Spanish-speaking homes who are learning to read in English, and to identify appropriate materials and techniques for teaching these skills in a culturally integrated first grade classroom.

Procedure. In the Spring of 1964, first grade teachers were identified in Colorado school districts who had between ten and twenty Spanish-speaking pupils in their rooms in addition to some English-speaking pupils; were willing to participate in a research project; and met uniform criteria of a bachelor's degree, Colorado teacher certification, at least three years of experience teaching first grade, and recommendation by the school principal as an excellent teacher, twenty-nine teachers in twenty-one schools in fifteen school districts were selected to participate. The teachers averaged 18.6 years of teaching experience, 12.0 of which was in first grade, with a range of four to thirty-nine years of experience teaching first grade.

At a one-day workshop in June, 1964, the teachers completed the Teacher Inventory of Approaches to the Teaching of Reading (1) before being assigned to experimental groups. Assignment to groups was done at random after some geographic stratification to be sure

that each experimental group would be represented in each of the three major areas of the State which were participating. The teachers were given a preliminary explanation of the experimental approach to be used, and literature on teaching Spanish-speaking children to be studied during the summer.

During the summer of 1964, the Director met separately with designated consultants for each of the three experimental approaches. Teaching guides for each approach were worked out, and then presented to the teachers in August at separate one-day workshops for each group. A "Skill Book" listing detailed objectives for first grade reading instruction for Spanish-speaking children was also presented and explained.

The BR group were required to use a reader series new to them, just as the other two experimental groups had materials new to them. The Betts Basic Readers, Third Edition (2) were chosen by the teachers with the approval of the BR Consultant, Dr. Mildred Bebell of New York University. A wide range of readiness and beginning reading materials included in this series were provided. The BR teachers were asked to follow the teachers' guides for the basal series closely, but with modifications suggested by good teaching practice and the "Skill Book."

Dr. Faye L. Bumpass of Texas Technological College served as Consultant for the TESL group. The We Learn English series by Bumpass (3) was used, along with a flannelboard and collection of flannelboard materials. Dr. Bumpas prepared a 59-page teacher's guide to supplement the Teacher's Guide for the Books, which were designed for teaching English to Spanish-speaking primary grade

children. Aural-oral pattern practice was emphasized with a rich variety of activities in the sequence, "Listen, repeat, practice, look and say, read, ask and answer, write."

Dr. R. V. Allen of the University of Arizona served as LEA Consultant. Dr. Allen was coauthor of Learning to Read Through Experience by Lee and Allen (4). Three LEA teaching units prepared by the San Diego County schools and five experimental teaching units prepared by Dr. Allen were used by the LEA group. The approach emphasized the introduction of new experiences, followed by practice on how to tell about the experience in English, discussion, dictation to the teacher who recorded the sentences on charts, oral practice and reading practice with the charts. The teacher gradually introduced organized systems for grouping words by sounds, topics, alphabet, etc., so that pupils could find words they had already studied. Individual creative expression and reading were encouraged. A large selection of papers, paints, markers, chalks, paste, fasteners, an easel, and reading books of all appropriate types were made available to the pupils.

Each group was asked to devote one hour per day to the experimental approach with the Spanish-speaking children, either grouped by themselves or grouped with the English-speaking children. Additional language activities, such as supplemental phonics or spelling instruction outside of the one hour were reported weekly by the teachers, so that a statistical factor could be applied in the analysis.

The pretests administered by the classroom teachers in September, 1964, included the Goodenough-Harris Drawing Test (a

nonlanguage intelligence test), the Prueba de Habilidad General (Spanish language intelligence test administered in Spanish via tape recording), Pintner-Cunningham Primary Test (English language intelligence test), Metropolitan Readiness Tests, Murphy-Durrell Diagnostic Reading Readiness Test, Pattern Copying and Identical Forms tests by Thurstone, and the Linguistic Capacity Index by Brengelman and Manning.

The first month of school in each class was taken up with readiness and testing activities. Each class then undertook the experimental approach for 140 school days. Teachers reported their activities weekly to the Director. Individual questions were discussed by phone or mail. The Director visited each classroom twice (each series of visits took four weeks and over 4,000 miles). After the 140-day period, a series of posttests were administered by the classroom teachers. The posttests given to the total sample included An Inventory of Reading Attitude developed by the San Diego County Schools, the same Metropolitan Readiness Tests given in the fall (except the Numbers test), the same Murphy-Durrell Diagnostic Reading Readiness Test (Phonemes test, Parts I and II only) as given in the fall, the same Linguistic Capacity Index as given in the fall, the Stanford Achievement Test Primary I Battery (except Arithmetic), the Level 1 Test of Reading from the Inter-American series by Manuel, and two forms of the First Grade Written Language Measure developed by a committee of directors of first grade reading studies. In addition, oral tests were given to a smaller sample by the school principals, including the Gilmore Oral Reading Test, Phonetically Regular Words Oral Reading Test, Gates Word

Pronunciation Test, and Karlson Phonemic Word Test. These tests were scored from tape recordings. All tests were scored under the supervision of the Director and checked by the Director. Intercorrelations among all variables, and factor analyses carried out separately for pretest, environmental, and posttest variables, were used to define covariates and dependent variables for analyses of covariance. Dr. John Horn of the University of Denver served as Consultant for the statistical analyses.

Results. The subject sample was not fully representative of all Spanish-speaking people in the Southwest. The sample was largely from the New Mexican culture group, instead of the Mexican immigrant group, and the sample was more representative of the rural resident population than urban. Although they should be recognized, these differences were probably not of great consequence in regard to first grade reading insturction.

Information available for the computer analyses included 117 scores on each of 294 Spanish-speaking first grade children (98 in each experimental group). Fifteen covariates were identified as representative of the major pretest, environmental, and process variables which had correlations with appropriate posttest scores equal to or greater than .20 (P = less than .01). Represented in the covariates were eleven readiness test scores; three intelligence test scores; teacher ratings on pupil health and mental health; the median income of families and unrelated adults in the community from the 1960 census (this had a negative correlation of .40 with the Test of Reading score); three teacher

ratings on the child's facility with English at the start of the study; the "Basic" score on the Teacher Inventory of Approaches to the Teaching of Reading (this had a negative correlation of .35 with the Test of Reading score); four ratings by the Director concerning teacher competence; three ratings by the teachers concerning their opinion of the experimental method and materials; the amount of time spent on supplementary phonics instruction using a sequential method; pupil attendance and pupil sex (low correlation favored girls).

The factor analysis on posttest scores yielded ten dependent variables representing combinations of twenty-six different subtests. The combinations of scores for dependent variables were set up so that the minimum intercorrelation for components of any one dependent variable was .40. There was no overlap (use of a subtest score in more than one dependent variable), except for the general reading achievement variable. The results are shown below:

	Number of Subtest Scores in Dependent Variable	Number of Covariates Used	Method Favored	Level of Significance of F Value for Adjusted Means
1. Understanding spoken English	5	10	No difference	$P > .05$
2. Oral vocabulary	3	9	TESL and BR	$P < .01$
3. Reading readiness	4	10	BR	$P < .001$
4. Reading vocabulary	2	15	BR	$P < .01$
5. Word recognition skills	2	15	BR	$P < .05$
6. Reading comprehension	2	15	BR and TESL	$P < .01$

7. Attitude toward reading	1	6	BR	$P < .01$
8. General reading achievement	5	15	BR	$P < .01$
9. Writing mechanics skills	2	13	No difference	$P > .05$
0. Writing fluency	4	13	LEA and TESL	$P < .01$

Conclusions. The amount of data available permitted interpretations which are not included here. The major points of interest may be summarized as follows:

1. The experimental approach which developed the highest achievement in reading skills was the basal reader approach. The use of a basal reader approach with Spanish-speaking first grade children is recommended when the child is found to be ready to begin formal reading instruction. The evidence leading to this conclusion may have been influenced somewhat by a relative lack of experience with the experimental method on the part of TESL and LEA teachers. However, certain culturally determined thinking and behavior patterns, such as an unwillingness to initiate original expression in a formal school setting, may have been partly responsible for the superiority of the basal reader approach in developing reading skills.

2. A combination of the TESL and LEA approaches has been widely used at preschool and kindergarten levels for the development of oral English skills and experience background. Nothing in this study should be construed as unfavorable to this practice. At the first grade level, the TESL and LEA were shown to have particular strengths in oral vocabulary and writing fluency,

respectively. Thus, they may be recommended as supplementary approaches for the development of language skills other than reading with Spanish-speaking first grade children.

3. The relatively high negative correlation between reading achievement and the median income of families and unrelated adults in the community deserves consideration. While a correlation does not necessarily indicate a source of cause, something about living in a high-income community is disadvantageous to the Spanish-speaking child. It may be that high-income communities need to examine carefully their attitudes and their provisions for developmental activities (kindergarten for all rather than for those with their own transportation, curriculum adaptations, etc.) for possible discrimination against the Spanish-speaking child.

4. The pretest and environmental variables which were identified as valid covariates, in comparison with the many variables which were not so identified, indicate factors which should be examined by schools seeking to improve reading achievement by Spanish-speaking children. In addition to normal reading readiness activities, the following factors should be examined: pupil health and mental health; pupil ability to speak and understand English on entrance into first grade; teachers' abilities to structure their classes, evoke pupil participation, and give attention to individual needs; teacher competence in general; pupil attendance; teachers' attitudes toward the methods and materials being used; and the amount of time spent on supplementary phonics instruction with a sequential method. Supplementary phonics instruction with an incidental method was not found to be helpful.

For information on objective number 2 of this study, the reader is referred to the complete report.

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